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March 28, 2011

Santa Barbara City Council
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

Re: Planning Commission Approval of the March 17, 2011 Hearing on the Application of Caltrans, District 5, Location: Highway 101 in the Vicinity of Salinas St. On/Off Ramps, APN: 099-MSC-0PW, SD-3 (Coastal) Zone, General Plan Designation: Open Space/Buffer (Case #MST2004-00701)

Mayor Schneider and Council Members:

I hereby file this appeal for the above referenced Planning Commission item. I am appealing the Planning Commission decision that the proposed project's landscape conform "within the given physical constraints that are being approved by the Planning Commission today."

The only focus of this appeal is the landscape median's proposed width. As approved by the above decision, the median width is 3'-3" (or 3.25'). The City of Santa Barbara Highway 101 Santa Barbara Coastal Parkway Design Guidelines, as Certified By The California Coastal Commission, 04/10/96, states on page 21: "Minimum median width should be similar to what exists near the Bird Refuge and throughout Montecito (approximately 10 feet of planting area)." To be fair, the document also states on the same page: "Safety and maintenance concerns surrounding the use of median planting should be taken into consideration."

Both the appointed Design Review Team (DRT) (consisting of an Architectural Board of Review (ABR) member and a Historic Landmarks Commissioner, among others) reviewed the plans on 1-12-11. The team did not support the median width of 3'-3". On 2-7-11, the ABR reviewed the plans and likewise did not support the 3'-3" median width. I am a commissioner on the Historic Landmarks Commission and a member of the DRT. I am not representing either group. I am appealing the decision as an individual.

One possible solution more in keeping with the median width as described in the City of Santa Barbara Highway 101 Santa Barbara Coastal Parkway Design Guidelines would be to apply a design exception to the standards for the lane widths. For instance, by reducing each of the north bound lane and ramp widths by 4", the median landscape would be 5'-11". This is obviously a compromise to the Guideline width of 10', but it is more appropriate than 3'-3". For many reasons, it is much easier for a plant to flourish in a larger planting area.

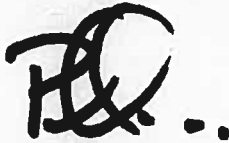
Caltrans indicated that they do not use design exceptions for landscape. I don't believe it is the landscape that is the cause for a design exception but rather the reconfiguration of the ramps into a third lane that triggers the need for the exception. It is true that the design exception would be applied

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to the lane widths to allow for more landscape in the proposed solution but it is the addition of the third lane that diminishes the width of the landscape median. If the highway configuration were to remain as it is built today, the median width is acceptable.

I respectfully request that you give this item your focused attention. I have presented one possible solution. I know there are others. Please honor this appeal and overturn the Planning Commission decision to use the proposed physical constraints for landscape. I believe the DRT, Caltrans and City Staff may be able to work out a solution if given the opportunity to apply design exceptions and change the physical constraints as proposed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "PS" followed by a flourish and two dots.

Philip Suding